



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Mountain
Plains
Region

1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO 80204-3585

Reply to
Attn. of:

SP-00-14
CACFP-609
SFSP-399

MAR 29 2000

Subject:

Food Stamp Case Numbers

To:

STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS -
(Child Nutrition Program)

Colorado ED, Colorado DPHE,
Iowa, Kansas, Missouri ED,
Missouri DH, Montana OPI,
Montana DPHHS, Nebraska,
North Dakota, South Dakota,
Utah and Wyoming

A question was ask recently as to whether food stamp electronic benefit transfer (EBT) numbers can be used to replace food stamp case numbers in determining categorical eligibility for free meals under the Child Nutrition Programs. Using the EBT card number in place of a food stamp case number would **not** be an accurate representation of a households eligibility for benefits.

The EBT number (which also may be called a primary account number or PAN) is never the household's case number. That number is assigned by the company that provides the cards and is used to tie the household into its food stamp balance using a personal identification number (PIN). There is also no expiration date on the EBT card because food stamps never expire.

A non-household member could have access to the EBT card or know the EBT number/PAN but not be eligible for food stamps. For example a person could be the authorized representative for an elderly neighbor but not be eligible for food stamps themselves. Also once benefits are issued to a food stamp household, they can remain active on the card even after the household is no longer eligible to receive food stamps.

Therefore, categorical eligibility for benefits under the Child Nutrition Programs **cannot** be based on an EBT card EBT number/PAN. The household must provide a case number which can be checked to determine if they are currently eligible.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Stella Nash".

STELLA NASH

Acting Regional Director
Child Nutrition Programs